

Dear Parents and Guardians,

As a school we have been looking for an assessment that will provide a way to gather more data regarding the development of our children's math skills, both to see demonstrated strengths and to highlight areas of need. We have chosen the *FastBridge Learning* program of assessment.

For the same reasons we chose DIBELS for reading, the FastBridge assessments for math are minimally disruptive and provide a wealth of information about how children are thinking about math – how fluent they are with facts and how they approach and solve multi-step problems, for example. The assessment is an *internal tool* to increase Guides', specialists', and administrators' knowledge of the strengths and challenges our children have in math. You will not receive a report, though we will share the results with you at conferences.

All children in grades 3-6 have taken the assessment this year. The assessment is closely aligned with the Common Core Standards. The children answer 30 questions on an iPad, listening to the questions with a headset; the assessment takes approximately 15 to 25 minutes. It is 'adapted,' meaning that the questions a child answers are dependent on whether they answered the previous question correctly or incorrectly. In this way, we get a clear picture of what the child was able to do and what they might need help with, either in terms of practicing test-taking skills and vocabulary, or in terms of learning new skills and remediating lagging skills. Children will take the assessment again in late January, followed by the MCA (Minnesota Comprehensive Assessment) in the Spring.

Here is what we told your children about taking the assessment and the reason for the assessment:

*The school has looked for a way to know more about how each of you think about math. We found a short assessment that gives us the most amount of information about how your own brain understands math. We will get to see what you already know - and what you don't already know; and then those are the things we will show you how to do next. Assessments and tests are different. Teachers give children tests when they want to see if a child really does know something they've been practicing and the teacher thinks the child should know it. Sometimes that makes children nervous. What we are doing today isn't a test like that; it's an assessment just to see what you know right now and what you don't; we don't expect you to know all of the answers! Some of the questions are for younger children and some of them are for older children, so some will be easy and some will be hard. Your job today is to do your best so we have the right information about your math skills, and then you can go back to your class and get back to your wonderful work.*

We have gone over the results and have identified children at Cornerstone who qualify for more support with math. In much the same way Megan works with children to support strong literacy development, Liesl will be working with children to support the development of stronger skills and more confidence in their approach to math work. If Liesl will be spending time with your child, you will receive an individual letter. We are so excited to be able to add to our program in this way this year and welcome your questions, always.